COMMUNITY LIFE COMMISSION MINUTES

PRESENT: Chair Swayne
Commissioners (8): Keeler, Scriber & Bryne

OTHERS PRESENT: Common Council Liaison: Lewis and Executive Assistant Hallett-Harris

EXCUSED: Hall, McClinsey, Common Council Liaison Fleming and Bakhle

LATE ARRIVALS: Hillson (6:11) & Hagood (6:15)

Meeting called to order: 6:05 p.m.

Review and Approval of Minutes: April 15, 2019 Minutes: 1st Scriber and Byrne 2nd - all in favor

Public Comment: John Spence – Public Art

Community Arts Partnership is working on a large public art sculpture project. They posted a request for qualifications, and received 14 responses from as far away as Key West; asked 6 of artists to take next step and actually submit proposals. He had spoken with Rick Manning a few months ago and thinking of Stewart Park, away from water, the area by the lagoon, near WaterFront Trail (photo provided of Stewart Park); He has also spoke w/Joann Cornish and Alex, also met with Gary Ferguson (Art in the Heart and learning about what he knew and their agreements they used. He is hoping to have public comment/input but haven’t gotten the proposals yet. Once proposals are received then he will put in circulation for public comment and CLC recommendations; Tom Knipe if everything went through then to Common Council in August. Some discussion regarding “Taughannock Giant”; History Center going to produce one; there was some people were strongly offended by the giant; making fun of giantism, looked also like ruse… and that there is no ties to Taughannock Giant = Tompkins Giant at this time. Explained the current procedures CLC goes through with the Planning Board; Tompkins County gave $20,000 grant in place from 2018-2019 -- $18,000 reserved and $2000 for foundation and promotion being reserved;

CLC Questions: What about maintenance costs down the road? Is this safe; selfie worthy and public wants to looks at and enjoy; maintenance should be built in.

CHAIR asked to make a note of lateness of members and Chair also reminded members we cannot vote if people aren’t here on time.
**Shopping Cart Ban Policy:** CLC received Commission Project Plan from Common Council to work on Shopping Cart Ban Policy. Ducson Nguyen came to discuss this-
The background is 4 years ago shopping cart ban was brought up and not only are they a nuisance to residences; currently, Jeanne Grace and her staff are tasked with picking up shopping carts and they find the current law ineffective. The current law is that shopping carts are collected at DPW by golf course, the owner is to come pick up and they do not pick up: Jeanne has gone to retailers with large amount of carts and gives them a bill, but not sure if these actually ever get paid. 2015 former council person, Eddie Rook was first person that took interest in this, and he drafted changes to current law. Ducson stated he sat down with Jeanne Grace and City Attorney and came up with a pared-down version of this policy and it was brought to City Administration. Ducson also reached out to 25 retailers in the area, only 2 retailers came to meeting. Current proposal suggests there would be a $50 fee per day that the carts are stored and retailers said this fee was too high; Wegmans and Home Depot are two of the retailers that came. They mentioned other municipalities have retention system in place using radio/electronic barrier, where you cannot take the cart past a barrier and Aldi has their coin system currently.

There was a discussion that people are taking carts for a reason and currently those people that take them are not punished, there are transportation issues and without providing some kind of solution for these vulnerable people who have this need, this will continue.

Example was given of Titus Tower which is greatest concentration of carts/need for them; there was a suggestion of possibly partnering with Ithaca Housing Authority or other non-profits to get personal use carts for the people that need them and be able to have personal use carts on hand to borrow them.

**Questions from CLC:** What if there was a centrally located cart return area/station? A place where all carts contained in one area. The Titus Tower residents getting those kinds of carts doesn’t help with mobility issue and we need to come up with something that they can use as shopping cart/walking aide as they lean forward on it for support/aide yet still have room for groceries/supplies. If somehow someone came up with someone that made something up to assist elderly/mobility issues that can make some kind of carts. This could be a project for Cornell or at IC Gerontology Department to add to this conversation or give insight? And we should reach out to these groups to regarding this. Other suggestions is that there is a population that gets shopping carts that don’t have car/transportation, and low income residents receive benefits once a month and do the bulk of their shopping and cannot use bus as large amount of items; What other models of small cities that has this ban went to no shopping carts in city? What are the cities and what if this does go through then what if shopping cart taken and what are the repercussions/consequences? Who is going to enforce this? Ducson stated that Santa Clara CA is one of the models he used/looked at and wanted to address CLC, creating brainstorming: what happens is retailer is charged $50 per cart/per day, have retailers phone number on each cart to call and have to retrieve the cart within 24 hours; thought of enterprising individual could set up shopping cart bounty to contract with retailers to get carts but there are concerns, be ways to scheme to get
carts and then get money for return of these. Task of CLC examine from all angles and come up with some examples. How does retailer keep track and if customer takes cart? Why is it their responsibility? This needs to be researched by Commission for these many reasons, taking work already done, the research and now have time line of August and few months later. Any questions can be directed to Ducson. There was a question of whether there is a budget for this i.e., building of shopping cart return rack, etc., and it was pointed out that this is already costing the City time and money for staff, as well as the retailers. Wegmans was concerned with the suggested $50 per day/per cart daily fee and their liability in retrieving on private property, in creeks, etc.; Tops has barrier system now, how much was this? The cost of $200-$250 is what a new cart cost to buy for retailers; talk to retailers and dig in deeper how to solve people needing these? Does Wegmans have any shopping cart return requirements already in place? They have many locations and their main concern was amount of fee and liability questions for under -18 retrieving carts, etc. Two sides: need/ transportation as well as need of people to their home/residence. There will be a need for Subcommittee to work on this.

**Public Art Working Group:** Chair gave update on 1st round of murals – new system in place w/Planning Department and have created subcommittee; there was community complaint after 1st round that subcommittee wasn’t diverse enough and impression in diversity in choices of art we chose; Workforce Diversity Committee Meeting this week; Alex @ Planning, Keeler and Chair to give diverse list to start and who they reached out to and not sure that it wasn’t diverse to begin with, but CLC will be working on this for future; we will make sure extra effort to make working group, public art funding and making effort on all fronts as well as the Planning Department. Public Art Working Group and looking at different people and recommendations on list.

Question of why the public art sculpture (John Spence) isn’t through City? Community Arts Partnership is not City of Ithaca organization, they are a non-profit group – this sculpture being placed on city/county property and its county funded; doesn’t matter where funding comes from CLC has to approve of this. CLC our role and the subcommittee’s role the same for all city art regardless of where funding comes from. Chair will run it by Alex @ Planning and that we were notified of this sculpture, asked to approve all City Art? Initial review already done, CLC to ask John Spence for follow up in terms of his dates and his request for qualifications of those and as well as the 6 proposals and how the decision was made. What is the role of CLC is regarding this county funded art on City property? Chair to have conversation w/John Spence and Alex w/Planning regarding this, she will send us info from those conversations. This is how we learn from different processes and come up with practical solutions. Having some clarity on this art process? This is a topic that spans more than one commission (CLC and Parks) and Chair will bring up at the next Commission Chairs Meeting and let us know.

Keeler said group looking at city public art, support or advocacy; permission to public to use city buildings if art could have funding; research or outreach; goal of having some artists on committee, some people for economic development, grants, funding and administration; diversity of people and opinions and ideas; He spoke with the Director of
Southside who has recently accepted job out of state and will give other names; Fe Nun he spoke with and will get together to brainstorm for other names as well for the subcommittee; including students, haven’t yet but Tom Knipe gave names; There should be high school students included and Keeler to check in with Southside because of the mural project and all of the young women involved in this and working on project for that had a lot to do with empowerment; Chair to set time line have group created by would like to have group together in a month and just protocols for appointment of advisors and once together what we will be doing to create a form going in other direction that goes to Counsel and to keep them in the loop and any suggestions of people should be given to Keeler.

**Follow Up Cornell Conversations:** We got a lot of info, and question now is: What does CLC want to do? Who and what key points are we looking into/thoughts: Want to know that this isn’t all for nothing and have some kind of updated numbers and updated survey and he could do some work on this good to bounce ideas – data; what wasn’t in that report; new ideas; helping by funding; other piece from Mayor was real life stories to back up actually talk to people and get people to present to us and share what it is all about make It powerful; more research, crunching numbers researching on alternative ways to get funding and stories; CLC members have all agreed to do more research on this and both Byrne & Hillson have volunteered to be on this working group. Fleming noted that the current MOU runs through 2024 and has CLC actually seen that MOU? and we should have solid understanding and what was written in past; key points now and recommendations; we will need to have public info sessions; CU refute and Gary at Cornell – finding common ground is more likely way to get them to talk (possible contribute to public art?). Moving forward to invite CU to present to us and their side of the story; making sure that’s there and be more knowledgeable of issues; Cornell wanting to make Ithaca better place; staff, students, professors; why Ithaca? as business owner/you can come to Ithaca to own a bookstore; we are a cooperative – It might be helpful to talk with some people from the employees assembly at CU also reach out to collective bargain units at CU like dining staff and people who could benefit from enhanced contributions that CU could make;

The Cornell Follow Up Working Group reviewing everything and dig in are they fulfilling MOU research how other universities are doing and update info; look at alternative fundings in the community; etc., start outlining what we are going to do and if need be, fill those needs with more CLC or go outside, etc. Should be fairly soon we invite CU;

**Flag Policy** – Chair gave update of flag policy – came to City Admin 5/15– reviewed proposal they had a questions and a couple of procedural recommendations; Chair will forward questions; and get done before next meeting; she will forward questions to Hall and Hillson before next City Admin mtg on June 19. Need to know whether the county policy passed? Hall & Hillson to follow up at next meeting – Chair or subcommittee need to go to City Admin Meeting or committee?  

We had talked about plastic bag ban that was then passed by NYS on March 2020, Lewis brought question of banning the use of single use plastic utensils, if CLC would
be interested in recommendation to the City of banning the purchases of single use plastic utensils for events/meetings. We would like further information to further support that or can we just go forward with recommendation? There was mention regarding straws as well. Lewis will get more information urging City into banning purchases of single use plastic utensils for meetings/ youth programs/GIAC/ IYB?

**June Meeting** – Did MATCOM approve ADA Coordinator? Chair will get an update on commissioner’s meeting; follow up on flags from Hall & Hillson; check in from Byrne & Hillson regarding Cornell research; info from Keeler on Public Art Working Group; Byrne will send members the existing Cornell MOU; shopping carts research by Sibber, wants to have assistance and Chair to do follow up email to join in on the shopping carts working group; Joy Das should be appointed to CLC by next meeting;

Chair has asked that lateness will be noted at each meeting;

7:42 Adjourned

**Next Meeting:**
Monday, June 17, 2019, 6:00 p.m., Common Council Chambers, 3rd Floor

**Adjournment:**
On a motion, the meeting was adjourned at 7:42 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted by,
Jody Hallett-Harris, Executive Assistant
CALL SUMMARY
The Tompkins Giant

Community Arts Partnership (CAP) of Tompkins County and the Tompkins County Tourism Program are seeking qualified artists who can be inspired by the story of the Taughannock Giant (see project description below) and who could imagine and create an original larger-than-life outdoor sculpture installation that evokes a similar sense of awe and wonder.

BUDGET
The total allocated funds for this project are $18,000. This amount is inclusive of design, fabrication, shipping and installation expenses, travel, insurance and other project related expenses. CAP will have additional funding for the promotion of the finished piece.

Please note that there could be community volunteer participation, if needed.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION
Background: In 1879, in the Finger Lakes region of Upstate New York, the remains of what appeared to be a well-preserved, petrified specimen of an ancient seven foot man were uncovered during a road excavation. Declared by local scientists to be authentic, the Taughannock Giant became a public and media sensation attracting enormous attention and seen by thousands of visitors to Trumansburg, New York.

Eventually, this sculpted man would be declared to be a fake and a hoax. We might now describe it as a successful public art project; a sculpture work/performance piece that embraced people’s fascination and excitement around human relationships to nature, environment, science and time, along with the appeal of local history and sense of place, mystery and a spark of magical thinking.

The current project is a nod to the story shared above as a part of local history while inviting residents and visitors to experience a new whimsical, artistic creation, the Tompkins Giant.

It is important to note that the finished piece will not have to be a giant per se but must suggest a giant in some way.

ARTWORK GOALS
The artwork sought should be the vision of the artist, or a team of artists, using the term “giant” as a starting point to create a piece of public art that elicits joy and wonder and
illustrates a phrase often used to describe Ithaca, New York as being “ten square miles surrounded by reality.”

The successful piece will help brand Tompkins County as an important cultural destination in upstate New York, appealing to an audience that is diverse in age, income, cultural background, and artistic appreciation.

The artwork must be fabricated to be withstand the outdoor elements of upstate New York, be low maintenance, and demonstrate an awareness of public safety concerns.

A successful piece will 'spark joy' in the viewer and express the artists' aesthetic sensibility.

ARTWORK LOCATION DESCRIPTION
The location of this installation will be in Tompkins County, in or near the City of Ithaca New York. The exact location is yet to be determined, but the art will most likely be installed in a natural non-urban setting close to or in the City of Ithaca, New York.

ARTIST ELIGIBILITY REQUIREMENTS
Open to all.
Individual artists or a collaboration of artists are welcome to apply.
Please write a letter of interest explaining why you would be a good fit for this project based on your previous work. Please limit this to approximately 500 words.

APPLICATION REQUIREMENTS:
Related to previous work please provide:

Photographs and detailed descriptions of previous work
Descriptions of your prior experience with large scale art construction, assembly, installation and materials;
Prior project budgets;
References from 3 sources who know your work well;

Related to this current project please provide:

Your schedule / availability, and any scheduling limitations;
Your ability to work locally or your travel and housing needs,
Potential space needs for work and space needed for the completed project;
Potential volunteer requests and expertise needed.

SELECTION PROCESS
-Submitted Request for Qualification (RFQ) materials will be collected by the staff of the Community Arts Partnership.
Final determinations will be made by a Review Panel consisting of staff member(s) of Community Arts Partnership, the Tompkins County Tourism Program, and select members of the community.

Send electronically by PDF to: Director@artspartner.org
Or
Hard copies can be mailed to:
John Spence, Executive Director
Community Arts Partnership
110 N. Tioga Street
Ithaca, NY 14850

SELECTION CRITERIA
-Eligible artists will be selected based on the evidence of their capability to successfully complete a large scale public art installation.
- The alignment of an artist's previous work and the goals of this current programs will also be a consideration.

TIMELINE
-Materials for this Request for Qualifications (RFQ) must be received by end-of-day on Monday April 22nd, 2019.
-The Panel will make its determination by May 15th, 2019. Selected artists will then be invited to submit a Request for Proposals (RFP) detailing their vision for a new Tompkins Giant with a submission deadline of June 30, 2019.
- Work on the Giant should be slated to begin mid-late summer 2019.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Please direct questions to:

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